THE SOCIALIST VICTORY IN GERMANY.

BY HERMANN KUTNOW.

Surprising and contradictory is the latest news from the "Fatherland." The young Emperor, trying to show himself as a protector of the working classes, calls an International Labor Conference for the amelioration of the condition of the masses. But, instead of arousing the enthusiasm of Germany's workingmen, he and his party are badly beaten by the socialists in the recent elections to Parliament. What does all this mean? If the Kaiser really is the friend of the lower classes, as our leading daily contemporaries so enthusiastically proclaim, how could his party experience such a dreadful defeat? Enthusiasm covers the eyes of the observer with a rosy veil, which makes one easily misjudge the true meaning of important events. Let us therefore briefly review, in a cool and impartial manner, the history of German socialism from the regeneration of the German Empire up to the present time, and we will soon understand the present victory of its followers, which was by no means a surprise to those acquainted with the home politics of the Iron Chancellor.

To keep up the glory of Germany's rulers, gained in the French war, increasing demands upon the marrow of the German nation had to be asked for from year to year The immense and still growing standing armies in Europe, which at the present time cost per annum over three times the amount paid by France as a war indemnity to Germany, are bound to exhaust and to ruin every country on that continent. The old Roman principle, "Si vis pacem, para bellum," ("If you wish peace prepare for war"), carried out to the extreme, means nothing else but a so-called "freeze-out" game played by the different Governments at the expense of their people.

Socialism in Germany was in its earliest infancy before Bismarck's power commenced, but with the growth of the Iron Chancellor's omnipotence the entant terreible grew in proportion. And quite naturally so. When, after the return of the glorious armies from France in 1871, thousands of men, discharged from military duties, were thrown upon their own resources, many of them, breadless, homeless and unable to find satisfactory employment, soon became acquainted with the dire consequences of a so-called glorious war. But this was not all. The strength of the standing armies had to be increased to keep peace, and for this the same poor men had also to pay their shares. Taxes of all kinds had to be levied, and each successive Legislature had to grant new demands, placing new burdens upon the shoulders of the people. Therefore the socialistic party was bound to grow, and soon had over twenty representatives in Parliament, and became very obnoxious to the Reichskanzler by opposing every new demand upon the purses of the nation. Although they were not strong enough to check his doings, yet they enlightened the masses upon the same. The party grew too mighty, and therefore had to be crushed.

Luck favored Bismarck; the luck which followed him and his illustrious master, William I., until it became proverbial. The two idiotic attacks of Hoedel and Nobiling upon Emperor William's life gave Bismarck a terrible weapon against his antagonists. Although neither of the assassins belonged to the socialists, yet—to use a phrase of the Reichskanzler — they were "pinned to their coat-tail." The indignation of the whole German nation was most cleverly aroused against that party, and the so-called Socialistengesetz (an exceptional law for suppressing socialism) was introduced in and passed by the Parliament for the duration of two years. This absolute power was given to Bismarck against his growing enemy, the socialists, and he apparently crushed them. All their newspapers were suppressed, their political societies dissolved, and their leaders dispersed by expulsion from their homes. Over the German capital and other large cities the state of minor siege was declared, and all socialistic public utterances in these places were most severely punished. Even up to this day Berlin is under a state of siege, although there is no comprehensible reason for it whatsoever.

Although wounded to the core, the many-headed monster was not killed. The social problem is not to be solved with police restrictions. The fire, apparently extinguished by a sudden torrent, still glimmered faintly under the thick layer of ashes. The expulsion of the socialistic leaders from the German capital, to which they could return only during Parliamentary sessions, and which they had to leave again on the same day Parliament adjourned or was dissolved, had not the effect desired by the Government. Quite to the contrary. These men, highly educated and conversant with the social wrongs of the people, carried their ideas abroad to other places wherever they took up their new domicile, and thus very effectively propagated their cause. In the meantime Bismarck, in his desire to raise more funds for the army, and to increase the number of the same, had often to battle with a strong opposition, as whenever it came to grant large amounts, and to pile new burdens upon the shoulders of the nation, there were other thinking men besides the socialists who dared to raise their voices against the Chancellor. But whosoever was not with him was against him, and a so-called Reichsfeind (an enemy to the Empire). Whenever he saw that he could not get through with one party, he dropped the same, making new coalitions and combinations with the opposition. Thus, soon even less enlightened men saw that the whole Parliament was nothing more no less than a toy in Bismarck's hands. When nothing could enforce his whims and demands, a big warcry was raised, a rumor that neighbors were threatening to commence a new fight, and at once everything was granted.

Glory demands sacrifices of a nation, but the enemy of glory is hunger. Therefore, the socialistic party soon grew bigger and stronger than before, and even in other parties Bismarck's enemies increased steadily. Every two years, however, by some means he succeeded in getting Parliament to prolong the socialistic law. If he did not succeed, Parliament was dissolved, and the new elections brought him the desired majority. Contrary to the constitutions of other monarchies, where the Cabinet abdicates if it finds the majority of the legislative body against itself, in Germany Bismarck, like the iron laws of nature, is eternal and Parliament mortal. As long as senile William I. lived it became an act of piety toward him to prolong the unreasonable stringent measures against the socialists, although they never committed any other offense than that they tried to change and improve the conditions of the workingmen in a most peaceable way. The majority of the German nation knew very well that the measure was wrong, and when the unfortunate Emperor Frederick III. ascended the throne everybody expected to see the socialistic law abolished. In fact, it looked as if he was determined to govern with, and not against the majority of his Parliament. But alas! before he could show his sincere intentions, a cruel fate determined his royal career of ninety-nine days. His son, an inexperienced youth, filled with all the pride and vanity of a feudal monarch, and showing a very strong intention to carry out his own ideas and to reign according to his own will, followed him.

What could be expected from a young hotspur, who was first of everything else a soldier from top to toe, and who soon after his ascension to the throne, expressed himself at a public dinner that he would rather see every man of his empire perish on the road than to give up one inch of his grandfather's conquests? Of course the military party hailed him with joy, but the nation looked with sorrow to the future. Bismarck, however, had long ago foreseen what was coming, and had therefore in time been a good teacher to the young Emperor, who proved to be a willing pupil, and therefore Bismarck's position, which had been somewhat weakened when Frederick followed his father, seemed again te grow so much stronger when William II. succeeded Frederick. In the meantime Bismarck tried to check the spread of socialism by playing himself off as a social reformer and bringing forth several very insufficient and imperfect laws for the amelioration of the working classes, which were passed by his ever-ready Parliament. The climax of all these laws, and the most incomplete of them, is the so-called Alterversorgungsgesetz, the institution of a kind of pension for workingmen after they reach their sixtieth year. This was most emphatically condemned by the working population of Germany, for it demanded that a certain percentage of the wages of each workingman should be deducted weekly. Each laborer was furthermore to keep a book, wherein the sums thus deducted were regularly entered, and by means of which he could show (after having paid for at least twenty years or more) that he was entitled to said pension, which was not sufficient to support a human creature, no matter how modest his pretensions might be.

The socialists furthermore saw in this law another police measure to control their wages and doings from day to day, from week to week, and from year to year. Their whole and main purpose has always been to free themselves from governmental guardianship, and to think and act for themselves, and not to accept without their own consent laws and measures which the Government thought good enough for the "plebs." Next October the biennial term of the law against the socialists runs out once more, therefore, it would have been the duty of the last Parliament to renew the same, but it was very inconvenient for the Government to ask the same favor of the nation over and over again every two years, therefore it was resolved to demand once for all of the Parliament to raise these temporary restrictions to a permanent law. After hard struggles, Parliament consented to everything with the exception of one vital point—it insisted upon the eradication of the expulsion clause. Bismarck, however, is not the man who satisfies himself with concessions. The bow was drawn too tight. The law fell, and Parliament was dissolved once more. Before the new elections, the Emperor comes forth with his famous scheme for an International Labor Congress. But why does the German workingman not hail it with joy? Because he does not believe in its sincerity.

If the Emperor is in earnest to do something for the laborer's benefit, the latter wants foremost of all freedom of speech and equal rights with his fellow-citizens. He wants to see the socialistic law abolished before he can believe in a sincere social reform. The German socialists consist by no means of a rough, unruly, uneducated element, crying for anarchy. They are well enough educated to understand that a soldaten Kaiser as a social reformer is a contradiction in itself. They scorn the Emperor's scheme as a very clever electioneering trick, and the answer to the same was the complete defeat of the Governmental party at the polls. Now the socialists have regained more than their old power, have more seats than they ever held in Parliament, even at the height of their strength. They do not care for the labor congress, in which they will have no voice, nor would they participate in the same if they were invited, for they know well that the social question is not to be solved by rulers called to the throne by the "grace of God." They do not fear a new dissolution of Parliament, for they know that that would still more fill their ranks and gain them new victories. Thus the socialist victory means no more nor less than a disapproval of the household politics of Bismarck. He is too old for the new ideas of our present age, and the Emperor too young and inexperienced for them.

The recent elections in Germany ought to give the European monarchs a severe lesson; especially should they teach the young Emperor not to rely too much upon his royal power against the wishes of his subjects. But will he heed it? It does not seem so. What was the object in alarming the garrison of Berlin on the very day of the election; to call under arms an army stronger than the whole active military force of the United States? If it was merely to show that the same is ready for every emergency, the day was chosen very unluckily. The Emperor seems to be sowing the wind, and may reap a harvest of storm. The supplementary elections will show the correctness of this assertion. History teaches us that rulers in their struggles against the strife of their people for freedom have seldom been prudent enough to regard the lessons taught by precedents. The American people, as true republicans, cannot help sympathizing with the cause of the German population, and hoping that their present victory will be crowned by the success of the mighty movement to improve by peaceful methods the condition of the German working classes.—[Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper.]

Piracy.

Through an investigation instituted by Captain Enoch Turley, of the marine department of the Delaware Mutual Safety Insurance Company, it has come to light that an act of regular piracy has been perpetrated recently in the East by a shrewd set of fellows, who got off with a cargo of coal belonging to Norton & Co. The transaction was made through the ship broking firm of Manuel McShain & Co., to whom a man giving the name of Wiggins applied for a cargo, representing himself as captain of a vessel named the Calista. In November last, the schooner, by direction of McShain & Co., went to Camden and loaded with coal, the consigners being Norton & Co., and the destination being Norfolk. The transaction was made in a regular business like way, even to signing the bill of lading, that a t being performed by the so-called mate, who attested the name of J Beaston. The schooner has not been heard of since, and it has just been ascertained that there never was such a vessel as the Calista. The Board of Marine Underwriters has detailed Captains Samuels and Rowland to investigate the case. Men in shipping circles are amazed at the audacity of the act in changing the name of the schooner without legal permission, a crime punishable with a long term of imprisonment and legally coming under the head of piracy.—[Ex.

People who lay themselves liable to gossip are always the first to complain about its attacks.

THE PAN-AMERICAN RAILROAD.

The Pan-American Congress seems likely to accomplish nothing except to boom various subsidy schemes. This is not to say that its labors will prove entirely useless. Some of the subsidy projects have merit, and if carried out would be effective aids toward closer relations between the various parts of the American continent.

Of all the various suggestions favored by the Congress, the most captivating is that of a great trunk railroad connecting all the American nations. The scheme is not as wild as it may seem. It is not nearly as wild as the construction of the Central and Union Pacific seemed twenty-five years ago. It is more promising than the Siberian railroad which the Russian Government has undertaken to finish in five years. Its advantages would be enormous, but it may be doubted whether they would be exactly such as its projectors imagine.

Much of the work is already done. We can go now by rail from Canada to the City of Mexico, and a line from Mexico is being pushed southward toward the Guatemalan frontier. This line will inevitably be extended to strike the Nicaragua canal, and from there to Panama is only a step. At the other end, all parts of Chile, the Argentine Republic, Paraguay, Uruguay and Southern Brazil are being connected by a network of rails. A road is projected to join this system with the capital of Bolivia and with the Peruvian lines. After this nothing would remain but the gap in Ecuador and Colombia, and the resources of those countries are quite sufficient to justify the construction of a railroad without any regard to its position as part of a grand trunk line.

But supposing the Alaskan and Patagonian Consolidated Air Line to be in operation, what should we gain by it? We should become better acquainted with South America, and should be in a better position to ship goods by sea. That would probably be all, and it would be enough. It is not likely that we could ever send freight to Chile or the Argentine Republic by rail as cheaply as by water. Panama probably marks the limit of through consignments of bulky articles from the United States, except in the case of towns so remote from the coast that mule rates form the greater part of the cost of transportation. But with daily mails and expresses, and the opportunity to send drummers and samples at any time and drop them off at new places every day, we should have an advantage over European competitors which would probably give us possession of the field. Our Mexican railroads have not only given us a vast commerce of their own; they have increased our exports to Mexico by sea. Similar effects would probably follow their extension to South America. —[S. F. Examiner.